

LANYARD NECKWEAR TWIN-ARM BOTTLED WATER HOLDER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention pertains to portable holders, and more particularly pertains to a bottled water or other beverage holder that can be worn about the neck of the individual. The present invention is particularly useful for holding beverage bottles of the blow-molded type that are composed of polyethylene terephthalate (PETE), and which are commonly used as beverage containers for water, soda, juices, beer and sports drinks.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Various personal and public activities, generally of a recreational or entertainment nature, are accompanied or enhanced by having food and beverage items at hand and readily available. Such activities can include the wide range of sporting activities like walking, running, hiking, and bicycling wherein one needs both hands to be free and unencumbered; or in recreational settings such as outdoor parties and picnics, fairs and amusement parks wherein one's hands need to be free and unencumbered, but the availability of food and beverage items, especially a beverage item such as bottled water, would be desirable.

This is an increasingly felt need because of the ever-increasing use and availability of a wide variety of beverages available in disposable or recyclable bottles made of polyethylene terephthalate or PETE. These bottles are typically produced through a process known as blow molding, and many factors act to limit the final design of the bottles, including recycling issues, food safety concerns, product distribution networks and brand name recognition. All of these factors combine to limit the final

shape and design of the bottle, resulting in a configuration that has become standard in the industry. Thus, the resulting range of PETE bottles is largely in the range of 200ml. to 750 ml. in volume. In addition, the bottles are generally designed with a smaller diameter in their mid-section to provide for the secure placement of a printed shrink-wrapped polyethylene label or a shred paper label. This is to comply with recycling industry standards that do not allow ink contamination by direct printing onto the bottle. PETE bottles also usually have a threaded portion on their neck section which allows for the use of screw-on, screw-off caps, or caps with an open/close feature. These bottles usually also include a flange at the bottom of the threaded portion. This quasi-standardization has created the opportunity for an improved manner of securing beverage bottles for users in various activities.

One common current solution to the problem of wanting a beverage item available for various activities is to use a pouch, purse, or backpack. While the use of pouch, purse, or backpack would be feasible in some situations, such as for use in hiking or at an amusement park, it would be undesirable for more robust physical activities such as bicycling, running or even brisk walking. The bulky and cumbersome nature of these items detracts from and interferes with the pleasurable engagement of such activities. Moreover, for activities such as bicycling, running or walking, where the accompanying food item would preferably be a beverage bottle of refreshing water, the use of a pouch, purse or backpack would be unnecessary.

Thus, the prior art discloses a number of devices that permit an individual to carry a beverage bottle or beverage container while engaged in various physical activities and events.

For example, the Magee patent (U.S. patent 6,394,329 B1) discloses a bottle holder having two adjacent openings of different sizes for engagement by the neck portion of a bottle.

The Gendala patent (U.S. patent 6,131,779) discloses a bottle carrier having a pair of spaced-apart pivotal claws for gripping and holding a beverage bottle therebetween.

The Falcaro patent (U.S. patent 5,810,218) discloses a bottle carrier having a u-shaped base through which a cord extends with the neck of the bottle engaged and held in position by the base while the cord can be placed about the neck.

Nonetheless, despite the ingenuity of the above devices there remains a need for a lightweight, portable water or beverage holder that is securable about the individual's neck and is capable of securely holding a beverage bottle while not interfering with the movements and activities of the individual.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention comprehends a bottled water or beverage holder in the form of a lanyard neck wear twin-arm holder that is attachable to the individual's neck so that the individual can have a beverage readily available for use. The holder includes a semi-circular bottle holding ring comprised of two pliable, arcuate ribs or arms. The flexible arms define a bottle opening for receiving and holding therein a beverage bottle. The arms are pliable to provide for the reception therein of the beverage bottle, and a gap separates the distal ends of the arms thereby allowing for the flexion of the arms for receiving and releasing the beverage bottle. In order to facilitate the reception of the beverage bottle within the opening defined by the arcuate arms, the clip holder includes a pair of rearwardly extending release and securement prongs, with each prong being

integrally attached to each respective arm. Gripping and squeezing the prongs draws the distal ends of the arcuate arms away from each other so that the beverage bottle can be passed through the opening; and releasing the prongs returns the prongs to their normal position for gripping and holding the beverage bottle. Thus, the flexion of the arcuate arms allows the arms to hold the beverage bottle at the bottle's neck section, and the pliable configuration of the arms allows the arms to conform to beverage bottles having different neck section diameters. Moreover, the memory capability of the plastic resins used in the holder allows the arms to return to their original shape after the beverage bottle is removed.

The holder also includes a curvilinear web portion that is attached to the base of the arcuate arms and a main plate portion that is attached to, and extends upwardly from, the web portion. When the holder is attached about the individual's neck by a lanyard, the main plate portion is pendent from the individual's neck in a generally vertical disposition. The main plate portion includes opposed flat surfaces on which company logos and advertising slogans and phrases can be placed.

It is an objective of the present invention to provide a holder for a bottled water or other beverage bottle that is easily attachable about the individual's neck but does not interfere with or impede the physical activities engaged in by the individual.

It is another objective of the present invention to provide a holder for a water or other beverage bottle that securely grips and holds the beverage bottle thereby freeing the individual's hands for other purposes.

It is still another objective of the present invention to provide a holder for a water or other beverage bottle that can accommodate and display thereon company logos and advertising slogans and phrases.

It is still yet another objective of the present invention to provide a holder for a water or other beverage bottle that is lightweight, portable and capable of gripping and holding beverage bottles of various sizes and diameters.

These and other objects, features, and advantages will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon a perusal of the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment, an alternative embodiment, the accompanying drawings and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the twin-arm bottled water holder of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a front elevational view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 3 is a rear elevational view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 4 is a left side elevational view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 5 is a right side elevational view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 6 is a top plan view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1;

Figure 7 is a bottom plan view of the twin-arm bottled water holder first shown in figure 1; and

Figure 8 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment for the twin-arm water bottled holder illustrating the securement of the holder to a locking member having a decorative character figurine attached thereto.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Illustrated in figures 1 – 8 are several embodiments for a twin-arm bottled water holder. The holder 10 of the present invention is adapted for quick and easy placement on, and removal from, the neck of the individual. While the holder 10 is capable of gripping and holding beverage bottles of various sizes and designs, it is particularly suited for gripping and holding PETE-type plastic beverage bottles and containers having a capacity by volume of 200 ml. to 750 ml. Such beverage bottles and containers are commonly used to dispense fluids such as water, soft drinks, and juice. The holder 10 of the present invention permits the individual to have his or her hands free while engaging in physical activities such as bicycling, hiking, walking and running. The holder 10 is secured about the individual's neck so that the individual has a beverage handy and readily available for use. The holder 10 is preferably manufactured from a resilient, pliable plastic in a pressed, die cut or molded process. It has been found that the use of engineered plastic resins with a memory capability to obtain the requisite pliability and gripping and holding capability for the holder 10 is preferred.

Illustrated in figures 1 – 7 is the preferred embodiment of the portable, lightweight holder 10 that is placed about the individual's neck so that a beverage bottle can be disposed pendent from the individual's neck and available for use in a handy,

unobtrusive manner. The holder 10 includes a bottle holding ring in the form of a pair of pliable, arcuate or semi-circular arms or ribs 12 that define an opening 14 into and through which the neck portion of the beverage bottle is placed. The arms 12 include distal ends 16, and the distal ends 16 are spaced from each other to allow for the flexion of the arms 12 during the insertion of the beverage bottle and release and removal of the beverage bottle. The diameter of the opening 14 is particularly suited to accommodate the neck sections aforescribed beverage bottles having capacities of between 200 ml. and 750 ml. by volume. When the holder 10 is disposed pendent from the individual's neck, the arms 12 will extend outwardly and away from the individual's body.

As shown in figures 1, 6 and 7, the clip holder 10 includes structural members that can be manually grasped and squeezed for facilitating reception of the beverage bottle within the opening 14 and for releasing the beverage bottle from the arms 12. Specifically, the structural members that facilitate these operations include a pair of spaced-apart prongs 18 that are integrally attached to, and extend rearwardly from, the base portion 20 of the arms 12. When the individual desires to place a beverage bottle within the opening 14, he or she grasps and squeezes, with one hand, both prongs 18 inwardly toward each other. This causes both pliable arms 12 to flex slightly away from each other thereby enlarging the opening 14 to allow passage therethrough of the neck section of the beverage bottle. Releasing one's grasp on the prongs 18 allows the prongs 18 to return to their normal disposition and, as a consequence, the arms 12 close upon and contact the mid section of the bottle thereby gripping and holding the beverage bottle in position. Typically, the arms 12 will encircle the neck section of the beverage bottle just

below the flange usually found on the neck section, the weight of the bottle thereby being at least partially supported by the flange bearing on the arms 12.

As shown in figures 1 – 7, a curvilinear web portion 22 is connected to the base portion 20 of the arms 12. The configuration of the web portion 22 is such as to space the opening 14 defined by the arms 12 slightly away from the individual's body so that the beverage bottle being held therein doesn't strike or bounce against the individual while the individual is involved in various physical undertakings and activities. Integrally connected to the web portion 22, and extending upwardly therefrom, is a flat main plate portion 24. The main plate portion 24 includes a front surface 26 that is viewable and an opposite rear surface 28. The front surface 26 can accommodate thereon lettering and designs such as company slogans and phrases, artistic ornamentation, sports team insignias and advertising logos. The upper end 30 of the main plate portion 24 includes an aperture 32 through which a lanyard 34 is passed for suspending the holder 10 from the individual's neck by placing the lanyard 34 around the individual's neck.

An alternative embodiment for the clip holder 10 is illustrated in figure 8. The clip holder 36 of figure 8 includes the pliable, arcuate ribs or arms 12, the two spaced-apart, rearwardly extending prongs 18, and the curvilinear web portion 22 of the holder 10 illustrated in figures 1 – 7. However, modifications and additional structural members and features have been added as will be hereinafter described. The upper end of the web portion 22 includes two pliable, triangular-shaped tabs 38 separated from each other by a slot 40. In order to enhance the attractiveness and aesthetic appeal of the clip holder 10 the lanyard 34 is connected to a decorative character figurine 42 in the form of an easily recognizable object such as a Disney character, e.g., Mickey Mouse, Minnie

Mouse, Daffy Duck, Snow White or Sleeping Beauty. In fact, the decorative figurine 42 can be in the form or shape of an action hero or heroine from comic books or cartoons, a sports figure, a wrestling figure, or a television or movie character. The use of these decorative character figurines allows the individual to customize and individualize his holder 36 to suit the personality or style of the particular individual. At the bottom, generally the feet of the decorative figurine 42, is a base housing 44 having a hollow interior chamber or cavity 46. The base housing 44 also includes a pair of opposed side slots 48 and in order to lock the holder 36 to the decorative figurine 42 the tabs 38 are slid into the cavity 46 of the base housing 44 whereupon each tab 38 snap locks into each respective side slot 48.

In addition to the use of the triangular-shaped tabs 38 for locking the clip holder 36 to the decorative figurine 42, alternative locking and fastening means can include a screw on the upper end of the web portion 22 for connecting the holder 36 to the base housing 44. Also, the holder 36 can be custom molded as a one piece unit or the web portion 22 can be modified so that the web portion 22 can be glued, welded, or bonded to the base housing 44, or other type of base, of the character figurine 42.

The foregoing description discloses and describes several embodiments of the invention, and those skilled in the art will understand that other variations, alterations or modifications are possible and practicable, and will still come within the ambit of the invention as set forth in the following claims and equivalents thereof.